

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-09 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 T-03

OMB-01 IO-12 RSR-01 INRE-00 /096 W
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P R 150838 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6790

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 1588

E. O. 11652 C GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ASPAC, KS

SUBJECT: ROKG VIEWS ON ASPAC

SUMMARY: ROKG SEES CONTINUING USEFULNESS IN ASPAC, DESPITE
RECENT SETBACKS, AND HOPES TO KEEP ORGANIZATION FUNCTIONING.
END SUMMARY.

1. VICE FONMIN YUN SUK HEUN WAS DISAPPOINTED BUT NOT
PESSIMISTIC IN DISCUSSING ASPAC' S FUTURE WITH CHARGE' FOLLOWING
ANNOUNCEMENT OF MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT' S DECISION NO LONGER
TO PARTICIPATE IN ASPAC ACTIVITIES AND AUSTRALIAN MOVES IN
THIS DIRECTION. HE SAID THAT SMALLER COUNTRIES IN ASIA NEED
SOME FORMAL MECHANISM FOR MULTILATERAL CONSULTATION AND EX-
CHANGE OF VIEWS; THAT ASPAC WAS SUCH AN ORGANIZATION
IN BEING AND THAT IT SHOULD BE USED UNTIL SOMETHING BETTER COULD
TAKE ITS PLACE.

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2. IN DISCUSSING ASPAC' S PAST AND FUTURE HE MADE FOLLOWING MAJOR POINTS:

A. THE REAL PROBLEM OF ASPAC WAS NOT TAIWAN MEMBERSHIP BUT THE LACK OF A POSITIVE ATTITUDE OF THE MEMBERS TOWARDS THE ORGANIZATION.

B. THE PRC IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT ASPAC AND MEMBERSHIP IN THE ORGANIZATION, IN HIS JUDGMENT, REPRESENTED NO SIGNIFICANT OBSTACLE TO BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE PRC.

C. THE ROC, UNFORTUNATELY HAS NOT BEEN WILLING TO ADOPT

A LOW PROFILE IN DEFERENCE TO OTHER MEMBER' S CONCERN, MISPLACED IN YUN' S JUDGMENT, OVER ADVERSE PRC REACTION. TAIWAN APPEARS PREPARED TO SEE ORGANIZATION GO DOWN RATHER THAN MAKE CONCESSIONS.

D. IN ROK JUDGMENT, ASPAC HAS COMPLETE FLEXIBILITY AND CAN AND SHOULD BE MODIFIED TO SUIT PRESENT NEEDS OF MEMBERS. THIS POSITION WAS MADE CLEAR IN MINISTERIAL MEETING IN SEOUL LAST YEAR.

3. CURRENT HIGH LEVEL OF SUSPICION OF JAPAN IN ROKG EMERGED IN YUN' S OBSERVATION THAT JAPAN BEARS MAJOR SHARE OF BLAME FOR SETBACKS TO ASPAC. JAPANESE, HE SAID, HAVE BEEN COOL FOR SOME TIME AND WELCOMED MALAYSIAN ACTION WHICH STRUCK BLOW THEY WERE NOT PREPARED TO DO OPENLY. CHARGE' ASKED WHY JAPAN WOULD NOW WISH TO GET RID OF ASPAC WITH ITS OWN RELATIONS WITH THE PRC PROGRESSING WELL. YUN STATED THE JAPANESE WERE RESENTFUL THAT ASPAC HAD ITS BEGINNINGS IN SEOUL AND WERE INTERESTED ONLY IN MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS WHICH THEY COULD DOMINATE. CHARGE' NOTED THAT JAPAN HAD IN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS LEANED OVER BACKWARDS TO AVOID APPEARANCE OF DOMINANCE TO THE POINT WHERE IT MIGHT BE FAULTED FOR NOT EXERTING APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF LEADERSHIP. JAPANESE POWER WAS FURTHER SO EVIDENT THAT REGIONAL ORGANIZATION UNDER ITS CONTROL WOULD BE UNNECESSARY IF DOMINATION WERE IN FACT JAPANESE OBJECTIVE. YUN SHOOK OFF THESE ARGUMENTS WITH STATEMENT THAT FOR WHATEVER REASON, JAPANESE WERE BEHIND ASPAC' S DIFFICULTIES.

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